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TO THE
GREAT AND LEARNED
AMONG
CHRISTIAN S,
THE HUMBLE PETITION
OF A NUMBER OF
POOR, LOYAL, UNLEARNED CHRISTIANS.

TOGETHER WITH
PLAIN QUESTIONS,
STATED FOR DIRECT AND UNEQUIVOCAL ANSWERS,
TO
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D.F.R.S.
AND OTHER THE CHAMPIONS OF WHAT THEY CALL
REFORMATION.

THE WHOLE INTENDED TO REPRESENT THESE INNOVA-
TORS TO PUBLIC VIEW IN THEIR TRUE COLOURS,

AND TO SHEW
THAT ATTACHMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
AS RECORDED IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES,
IS THE BEST PRESERVATIVE TO THE PEACE OF THE STATE,
AND THE WELFARE OF MANKIND.

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TO THE

R E A D E R.

CHURCH and STATE are Words which have long been connected together, notwithstanding the furious Assaults of their Opponents.

The following Attempt hath been levelled to divest the Subject of Attachment to Party, and to shew that the CHRISTIAN RELIGION and the PEACE OF THE STATE are intimately and inseparably connected, and that those Men who endeavour by their Principles to pull Kings from their Thrones, and the Nobility and great Men from their exalted Stations, are acting consistently; they having long since endeavoured to degrade our blessed Lord and Saviour the King of Kings and Lord of Lords into a mere Man, and by Comments to undermine those

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those Holy Scriptures which are read in, and on which our National Church is built.

If this Tract should produce a Profit, the whole clear Gain arising from the first Edition shall be religiously applied as the first fruits to Charity: And as it is to serve no private End, it is hoped that it will not be taken amiss, that one Copy hath been directed and forwarded to you; with the Request, that if you approve of it, you will have the Goodness to bestow the Price (as part of the presumed Profit of the first Edition) upon the first Object of Charity which may present itself.

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To

TO THE GREAT AND LEARNED
AMONG CHRISTIANS,

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF A
NUMBER OF POOR, LOYAL, UNLEARNED
CHRISTIANS,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

THAT your Petitioners chiefly consist of
Farmers, Farmer's Servants, Mechanics
and Labouring Men, who having in their
youth been taught to read the Bible, and to
go to the Public Worship of God; have ever
considered themselves as Christians.

THAT your Petitioners are not all of the
same sentiments, some having been brought
up by their parents to go to church, and
others to go to meeting: And as they enter-
tain a great respect for the memory of their
religious parents, they have been hitherto
cautious not to give up the distinctions esta-
B blished

blished by them ; although from intercourse with each other, they find, that in matters which appear of greatest moment, their ancestors were much of a mind ; the ground of separation between them being (as they understand) chiefly concerning habits used in performing divine service—Whether the sacrament should be received sitting or kneeling—Whether a form of prayer should be used or not—And whether baptism should be administered to children or grown persons.

THAT notwithstanding ; your Petitioners being all agreed, that it is proper that the Bible should be read, and that Christians should live as Christians, in love, loyalty, and good neighbourhood, they have frequently (after service being ended on the Sabbath day) met in the evening, and have read the Bible, and in particular the New Testament, and have also done their best endeavour to make up any little differences, and to serve each other in every respect ; they discovering by the Bible, that it is their duty so to do ; and they have been particularly careful to keep and encourage respect for the King, and the whole Government, under whom they

they live ; the same being to their apprehension clearly enjoined in the New Testament, even at a time when it appears that the Governors of the world were Heathens, and some of them persecutors : And if so, they cannot but think, that not only respect and duty, but also a kind and grateful love, is due to the present KING, who they understand to be a man of the same religion with themselves, and not in the least ashamed of being A CONSTANT WORSHIPPER OF GOD. Your Petitioners therefore unanimously say, “ May “ God Almighty bless him, through Jesus “ Christ, the King of Kings, and Lord of “ Lords.”

THAT your Petitioners used to look forward to the Sabbath day as a Holy day, and not so much so on account of its being a day of cessation from labour, as a day of adoration of God, union at home, good neighbourhood, and love to each other : But they have lately endured the greatest misfortune, which renders them unhappy at the very times they formerly looked for happiness, and which takes its rise from certain ill-disposed persons endeavouring to undermine their attachment

both to their religion and their loyalty, and some of those who were formerly the most forward to every good work, have been gained over to their opinions, which are the direct reverse of their former profession; and instead of love and affection, good neighbourhood and charity, being, as heretofore, the inhabitants of their village, they are now frequently taken up in disputes, anger, and contention; so that there appears to have arisen a new religion, if it can be so called, among them.

THAT these subjects have not only been brought forward in conversation, but some of the books of their adversaries have been offered at a small price; particularly some tracts written by Dr. Priestley, a book called The Rights of Man, and some other books recommended by a society called The Society for Constitutional Information.

THAT your Petitioners late friends are often talking about *philosophic necessity*, and *materialism*, which your Petitioners cannot comprehend; and they are in general of opinion, that the same is not *material* to them,
and

and that there is no *necessity* that they should be plagued therewith, having observed that their late friends, instead of being loving Christians as heretofore, have become vehement disputants, and never happy, but when they are disturbing and puzzling your Petitioners with their new notions.

THAT although your Petitioners cannot comprehend high matters, they hope they are not assuming when they pretend to have common sense, and to understand the plain meaning of words; and from the little they have been forced to hear, they are of opinion, that the new notions tend to deny almost every assertion contained in the Bible, although their opponents pretend to reverence the same.

THAT if these disturbers would openly and avowedly deny any attachment to the Bible, your Petitioners would not be at any loss how to act, inasmuch as they are told by their Lord and Master, "Whosoever shall
 " be ashamed of me and of my words, of
 " him shall the Son of Man be ashamed
 " when he shall come in his own glory, and

“ in his Father's, and of the holy angels '.” They therefore in that case would not only openly attack these new ideas, but they hope such a spirit is in them, that although they would pray for their opponents, and not hurt a hair of their heads, they would also rather join the “ Noble Army of Martyrs,” than give up their veneration for the Bible.

THAT as plain men, more at home in handling the plough than an argument, they wish to confine themselves to PLAIN QUESTIONS ; and when they urge a text of scripture, they wish a POSITIVE ANSWER IN A FEW WORDS, and not to be referred to apologies as big as the Bible, and other voluminous and expensive publications,

THAT your Petitioners have been informed, that there have many answers been published to these writings, and that they are old opinions new revived ; but your Petitioners have neither ability to decide, nor inclination to let their fields remain untilled, or their families starve, whilst they are employed in these researches.

! Luke ix. 26.

THAT

THAT these dispositions encourage their disturbers to exult over them as if they were the conquerors, and your Petitioners were vanquished, which they by no means admit; and they have therefore, by the assistance of their friend the Vestry-Clerk, put the most material of the allegations of these reformers, together with plain questions for them to answer.

YOUR PETITIONERS therefore humbly request, that JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L.L.D. F.R.S. and your Petitioners' other disturbers, may be required, in the most SOLEMN MANNER, to give TRUE, DISTINCT, AND PERFECT ANSWERS to the following INTERROGATORIES, to the end, that such poor and ignorant men as your Petitioners, may, in a short point of view, see them in their true colours; or in default thereof, that their silence may be taken *pro confesso*. And in such case, that the said confederates may be publickly considered, if they are so, AS SUBVERTERS OF THE CHRIS-

TIAN RELIGION, and as entirely separated from the Christian faith. And inasmuch as your Petitioners are sensible, that the differences of opinion in their ancestors, which caused the unhappy separation between them, was, in point of importance, no more to be compared to these new-fangled notions, than a slight tooth-ach is to the plague, your Petitioners earnestly, solemnly, and for the love they bear to their neighbours, themselves, and their posterity, request that some means may be devised, in order TO UNITE THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THEIR FRIENDS IN THE DISSENTING INTEREST TOGETHER ; they being sensible of the endeavours after union in their opponents ; for your Petitioners are firmly persuaded, that it matters not with them, what a man is, or of what sentiments, so as he unites in opposition to the Church, the Government, and the Bible.

INSPI-

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

THIS SUBJECT may be considered as a FOUNDATION STONE, at least it is so with us; for such of us as are of the national church are only so, because we think that of all others it comes nearest to the SACRED SCRIPTURES and the primitive church. Such of us also as are Dissenters are so, because we think that the Scriptures are in favour of our particular sentiments: At the same time that we say so, we mutually lament the separation, and hope to see a re-union effected by those who have it in their power.

THEREFORE WE MUTUALLY DECLARE, THAT THE BIBLE CONTAINS OUR RELIGION.—And wherefore?

We are informed, that “all Scripture is
 “given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that
 “the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly
 “furnished unto all good works’.” In this

’ 2 Tim. iii. 16—17.

respect we are also of the same opinion with David, who had not heard "what we have heard", notwithstanding he might have greatly desired it. He declares, "O, how I love thy law: It is my meditation all the day".—"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God".—"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderous things out of thy law". And the last book in the Bible is expressly declared to be "THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants, things which must come to pass".

Not only our Church members, but our Dissenting brethren unite in thankfulness that our national Church professes the same thing, and are sorry they are on other accounts dissenters from a Church who so scripturally declares its faith, and who not only professes to reverence Scripture in words, but does so in deed and in truth, by constantly reading

¹ Luke x. 24.

² Psal. cxix. 97.

³ Psal. xlii. 1,

⁴ Psal. cxix. 18.

⁵ Rev. i. 1.

the same every day in the year, when its members can assemble for that purpose.

But if we understand our disturbers, they believe that Moses's account of the creation is a very imperfect one, though the best account extant in his day—That we are by no means bound by what St. Paul declares, but are to judge for ourselves—That so far from our believing all the Scripture, they declare, in direct contradiction thereto, that our Saviour Jesus Christ was not conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, but was of the seed of Joseph ; together with many other deviations too numerous here to mention.

We are aware that translation is not inspiration ; but still we believe the Providence of God has been in a peculiar manner over His Word, and that even in our translation it is THE WORD OF GOD : And therefore, not being able, for the beforementioned reasons, to refer to the several works of our disturbers, we demand to know of them in short :

Do

Do you degrade Moses into the recorder of a tradition? And unto a vain-glorious assumer in speaking in the name of his Maker, when he was not inspired by Him?

Have you ever declared, that the testimony of St. Paul, the apostle of us Gentiles, is not obligatory? Do not those who urge themselves to be your friends belie you? Have you declared this?

Have you denied that word which says,
 “ And the angel answered and said unto her,
 “ the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and
 “ the power of the Highest shall overshadow
 “ thee: Therefore also that Holy Thing
 “ which shall be born of thee shall be called
 “ the Son of God ’.”

If you have denied all or any of these things, where are you? Are you not like a ship at sea, without rudder or compass?

You will possibly say, your reason is your rudder and your compass too. If so, and all

* Luke i. 35.

the admonitions contained in this book should unhappily be thrown away upon you, act so far like honest men as to declare that YOUR OPINION, for which reason is but another name (as you will not approve of what the reason of another man shall say) that your opinion is, at least for you, the only criterion to which you will refer. This will declare you publickly to be what we fear you are; but which God grant you may see the error of, SETTERS UP OF YOUR OWNSELVES, for the opinion is the dearer self, and consequently setters up of a NEW RELIGION. If this be the case, let us part, and no longer be considered as professing the same religion; as we are for a very different one, namely, a religion which consists in following our blessed Master, revering his word, believing that it was "God who at sundry
 " times, and in divers manners spake in time
 " past unto our fathers by the prophets'," and particularly, by that great prophet Moses, who, for the greatness of his office, and the dignity of his mission, was worthy to be named as "like unto our heavenly Master".

¹ Heb. i. 1.

² Deut. xviii. 15.

We now address ourselves to those whom these innovators attempt to deceive, as well as those who have been drawn in by their arts to think well of them ; and we ask,

Is it not perfectly consistent in those who attempt to set up their opinion against the Word, which is the law of God, to set up their opinion also against all law, order, and good government ?

“ GREAT

“ GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF
 “ GODLINESS; GOD WAS MANI-
 “ FEST IN THE FLESH¹. ”

We conceive the whole contents of this book to be of importance; but if there is any head which we wish to treat with more than ordinary solemnity, it is the present, in which we mean to consider a subject which a believer will do, with as much holy fear, and religious awe, as was upon Aaron when he entered within the vail, into the Holy of Holies.

Here, we have been wounded indeed! Here we may again cry, Woe! woe! woe! How was David's holy zeal kindled, when he heard the uncircumcised Philistine Goliath of Gath “ defy the armies of the living God² ! ” How did it grieve the holy apostle James, to hear “ the rich in this world blaspheme that worthy “ name by which the poor were called³ ! ” But we have heard words which we will not utter! and from men who are desirous of

¹ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

² 1 Sam. xvii. 26.

³ James ii. 7.

being

being considered as PROFESSING the SAME RELIGION WITH OURSELVES.

The above mystery, and all other the mysteries with which it is connected, must depend upon scripture; and here our opponents assume to themselves the victory, as they assert, that we take our opinions from the first, second, and fifth articles of the church of England, and from the Athanasian creed; whereas they are the persons, according to their own account, who follow scripture.

In the former head we declared, and we now again, with reference to the subject in hand, repeat, and those of us who are churchmen, think they are acting the part of good churchmen in declaring that they profess no credence in these or any other of the articles of the church of England, neither in the Athanasian creed, any further or otherwise than the same are (and it is our opinion that they are) agreeable to the Holy Scriptures. As a corroboration of this declaration, we refer to the sixth article of the church of England; and we here subjoin a paper drawn up
I by

by one of our brethren, which he uses instead of the Athanasian creed, which he is cautious of using, he being fearful that the penner of it hath been, in so mysterious a subject, almost too explicit. If any of the learned and ruling men among us Christians should think that any good hint may be taken from it, his attention to it will meet an additional reward. It is, in part, moulded into the form of a prayer, and part into that of a creed; and is as follows:

O GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL GOD, who hast given us Thy Holy Word to be in this dark world “a lamp unto our feet, and a light “unto our path¹,” give me that Holy Spirit which is promised in Thy Word, saying, “If ye, being evil, know how to give good “gifts unto your children, how much more “shall your heavenly Father give the Holy “Spirit to them that ask Him².” I am sensible that I lack wisdom; but I now ask the same of Thee in faith³, and rely on Thy promise, that thou wilt give it unto me. Especially I pray for knowledge in Thy most

¹ Psal. cxix. 105.

² Luke xi. 13.

³ James i. 5.

Holy Word. O impress upon my mind the great importance of faith therein. Thou, O Lord, hast declared, "He that believeth, " and is baptized, shall be saved; but he " that believeth not, shall be damned ¹." O give me this faith; grant me this inward and spiritual regeneration ², as well as the outward and visible sign of baptism; that I may " flee from the wrath to come ³."

Thy Word declareth, that " Whosoever " cometh unto God, must believe that he " is, and that he is a rewarder of them that " diligently seek him ⁴." Give me, therefore, O my God, just and true ideas of Thy perfections, and a firm faith in all Thy declarations; particularly, may I never depart from a full and unbounded belief in Thy declaration, that the first and great commandment is, " Hear, O Israel; the Lord our " God is one Lord ⁵." Keep me ever from wavering with respect to this first and great commandment, and may I receive the whole of Thy Word as a good, and wise,

¹ Mark xvi. 16.

² John iii. 5.

³ Matt. iii. 7.

⁴ Heb. xi. 6.

⁵ Mark xii. 29.

and

and consistent word; and whenever men or devils would endeavour to shake my faith in any part thereof, give me, in the same spirit with my blessed Master, to reply, "It is written '."

I believe also, for Thy Word declares, that
 " In the beginning was the word, and the
 " word was with God, and the word was
 " God. The same was in the beginning
 " with God. All things were made by
 " him, and without him was not any thing
 " made that was made²;" I believe in the
 " Son of God, in whom we have redemp-
 " tion through his blood, even the forgive-
 " nesses of sins. Who is the image of the
 " invisible God, the first-born of every crea-
 " ture. For by him were all things created
 " that are in heaven and that are in earth,
 " visible and invisible, whether they be
 " thrones or dominions, principalities or
 " powers. All things were created by him,
 " and for him; and he is before all things,
 " and by him all things consist³." I believe
 also that Thomas, our Lord's once unbeliev-

¹ Matt. iv. 4.

² John i. 1, 3.

³ Col. i. 13, 17.

ing Apostle, made a good and unexceptionable confession, when after his conversion, he declared to his Master, that he was "his Lord and his God¹."

O Lord Jesus, who didst hear the prayer and receive the spirit of holy Stephen thy martyr², Thou who hast declared Thyself to be the first and the last, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last: He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen³." Thou, who didst "Open the understandings of thy disciples, that they might understand the Scriptures⁴," so open my understanding that I may see something of those holy mysteries which thou hast revealed therein; and as Isaiah thy servant saw something of thy glory when he beheld Thee "sitting upon Thy throne, high and lifted up⁵," with the holy seraphims about the same; crying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory⁶." Give me similar dispositions, and grant that

¹ John xx. 28.² Acts vii. 59.³ Rev. i. 17, 18.⁴ Luke xxiv. 25.⁵ Isaiah vi.⁶ John xii. 41.

I also may be one of that innumerable multitude who shall cry with a loud voice, “ Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever ¹. ”

At thy name “ Every knee shall bow both in heaven and in earth ². ” O therefore give me grace to “ Honour Thee the Son, even as I honour the Father ; knowing that he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him ³. ”

In pursuance of Thy promise, I also look up to Thee for that Holy Spirit which thou hast promised in Thy Word ⁴ ; with the gracious declaration by thy Apostle Paul, that the bodies of those who are thy true servants, are “ Temples of this Holy Spirit. ” Keep me from defiling the temple of God, knowing the admonition, that “ If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy ⁵. ” May the belief of this

¹ Rev. v. 13.

² Philippians ii. 10.

³ John v. 23.

⁴ John xiv. 16.

⁵ 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

truth keep me from every evil way. Thy Word declares that Ananias and Sapphira agreed together to "lie unto the Holy Spirit; and that they did not lie unto man, but unto God ¹." May their fearful example impress in me the most reverential obedience to Thy Spirit: That spirit, who in the creation, "moved " upon the face of the waters ²."

O holy Father! hear my prayer ³; O Lamb of God, who takest away the sin of the world ⁴, hear my petition. O God, " who art a spirit, and who hast declared " that those who worship Thee, must worship Thee in spirit and in truth ⁵, keep me from slighting, irreverently treating, or confusing, the gracious declarations which Thou hast given us in Thy Word.

And in firm faith may we receive thy declaration, that " there are three that bear record " in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the " Holy Spirit; and these three are one ⁶,"

In pursuance of Thy commandment, I was baptized in this faith, " In the name of the

¹ Acts v. 4.

² Gen. i. 2.

³ Matt. vi. 9.

⁴ John i. 29.

⁵ John iv. 24.

⁶ 1 John v. 7.

" Father,

“ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy
 “ Spirit ’.” This faith I pray Thee to con-
 firm and strengthen in me unto the end, that
 I also may sing “ The song of Moses and of
 the Lamb ²,” and rejoicing, join the hea-
 venly chorus, saying,

“ ALLELUIA !

“ SALVATION, AND GLORY, AND HONOUR, AND
 “ POWER, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD ³.”

“ ALLELUIA !

“ FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH ⁴.”

AMEN.

WE NOW ENQUIRE OF OUR DISTURBERS :

Dost thou believe that the Word was
 God ?

That all things were made by Him, and
 without Him was not any thing made that
 was made ?

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Rev. xv. 3.

³ Rev. xix. 1.

⁴ Rev. xix. 6.

Dost thou believe that Thomas made a good declaration, when, on his conversion, he cried out, " My Lord and my God !"

Dost thou believe that when Ananias and Sapphira lied unto the Holy Ghost, they lied unto God ?

Dost thou believe that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and that these three are one ?

Dost thou ever, by anticipation, fall down and cry, " Blessing, and honour, and glory, " and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon " the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever " and ever ' ?"

Pray be explicit ; for if we are rightly informed, instead of joining in such a song, you would rather stop your ears, and run away, than hear such words.

Oh ! if you hope for heaven, consider well ; you may run away from such songs on earth ;

¹ Rev. v 13.

but

but remember, the heavenly chorus is louder far ; for after the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders fall down before the Lamb, this hymn is sung by many angels round about the throne, and by the living creatures, and the elders, and the number of them is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, and they sing with a loud voice, “ Worthy is the
“ Lamb that was slain to receive power, and
“ riches, and wisdom, and strength, and ho-
“ nour, and glory, and blessing ¹.”

Wilt thou join in this chorus ?

If you are for heaven, you must ; there is but one place where, after death, you can escape the sounds : It is there, where those dwell who have been blasphemers : It is the place where every one shall be who loveth and maketh a lie ; those who deny the Word of God ; whether it be openly, or by comment upon it. Those who add unto, or take away from this precious book ² : But remember that this is a place of torment, of weep-

¹ Rev. v. 12.

² Rev. xiv. 11,

ing, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth'; where all the plagues written and denounced in the Word of God² against the adversaries are fully accomplished.

Is it not perfectly consistent, that those who will not submit to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, should also act in opposition to those kings and lords who acknowledge themselves to be the subjects of HIM BY WHOM KINGS REIGN?

¹ Matt. viii. 12.

² Rev. xxii. 19.

THE ATONEMENT.

Although we are ignorant, unlearned men, we are sensible that we are sinners : We feel it ; and we therefore thankfully read the account contained in the Old Testament dispensation of the solemnities of the great annual atonement ; and in particular of the 'scape-goat' ¹. We also wish as much as possible to consider ourselves separated from the wicked, and all wickedness in the world ; and it gives us comfort that God has even in the Old Testament dispensation made a separation between His people and their oppressors ; an account whereof we read in the books of Moses, where a lamb was ordered to be slain called the passover or paschal lamb ², which was to be the token ; that the house, on the posts of whose doors the blood of the lamb was sprinkled, was a house fearing and believing in Him ; consequently that His people dwelt therein.

¹ Lev. xvi.² Exod. xii.

We

We also conclude that as the law, the Old Testament dispensation, was but the “Shadow of the good things which were to come” under the gospel; that we shall find in it, the perfection of the above blessings; and we think that we have seen something of it, when on severally reflecting upon the ingratitude of sinning against so good a Master, and being deeply sensible of our faults, we have had such passages as the following brought into our minds.

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed ².”

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace ³.”

“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin ⁴.”

“Christ hath also once suffered for sins,

¹ Heb. x. 1.

² 1 Pet. ii. 24.

³ Eph. i. 8.

⁴ 1 John i. 7.

“ the

“ the just for the unjust, that he might
“ bring us to God ¹.”

“ We have an advocate with the Father,
“ Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the
“ propitiation for our sins ².”

“ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the
“ wilderness, even so must the Son of Man
“ be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in
“ Him should not perish, but have eternal
“ life ³.”

As the children of Israel were separated from their oppressors, we hope also to be separated from our oppressors; and as we know that those who plague and puzzle us will think themselves hardly used by being considered as our oppressors, we beg leave to observe, that a poor man's all is as much to him as the rich man's is to him; and some of us, though poor, owe no rent, and have moreover barns with grain in them, hayricks, cattle, and other stock, all of which we know the value of, and are thankful for;

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 17.

² 1 John ii. 1.

³ John iii. 14.

but

but we had rather see our barns and ricks on fire, and our cattle destroyed by the murrain, than be deprived of the comforts which we derive from our Bibles, and the glorious truths contained therein.—Wherefore?

Because, although we know the value of the temporal blessings we enjoy, they are not to be compared with the little foretaste we have had of the love of God, revealed in the Bible. And chiefly in the instance before us; for we read that “ God so loved the
“ world, that he gave his only-begotten
“ Son, that whosoever believeth in Him,
“ should not perish, but have everlasting
“ life ’.” Verily, “ He spared not his own
“ Son ’.”

Men are apt enough to believe good news, without sufficiently considering whether it be true; but, thank God, we have the Word of Truth itself for these “ Good tidings of
“ great joy ’.”

But can there be a person, PROFESSING
THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, who having

¹ John iii. 16.

² Rom. viii. 32.

³ Luke ii. 10.

the offer of an advantage which all the treasure in the universe could not acquire, and could only be purchased by the great price of the "Precious blood of Christ": Is there a person who can shut his heart to such good news, and treat the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing? We will not believe it possible, until you avow it.

Surely your pretended friends must have misrepresented you.

Do not you believe the foregoing declarations, and that "He was wounded for our transgressions; that He was bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and that with His stripes we were healed?"

Do not you believe that the Lord laid upon Him the iniquities of us all?

Do not you believe that He suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God?

If you deny these truths, also remember that "He who despised Moses' law, died

¹ 1 Pet. i. 19.

² Isaiah liii. 5.

"without

“ without mercy, under two or three witnesses;” and then consider “ Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace’.”

Are not the men who endeavour to take away from us the joy and confidence we have in the above declarations of our God, acting perfectly consistent in attempting to overturn every thing else which is dear to us?

• Heb. x, 28.

THE STATE OF THE DEAD.

Many of us have had religious parents; and from the triumphant manner in which some of them went off this stage, we concluded that when their souls parted from their bodies, that immediately their souls went to heaven; and we were confirmed in this opinion by many expressions which they used, intimating their firm faith in these things through their Saviour, who they declared had conquered death¹. And then they would cry in broken accents, “O death, where—
“where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy
“victory²!”

And in looking into our Bibles we find many arguments for their and our faith; and in particular, the gracious promise of our Lord and Saviour to the penitent thief, saying, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

The Apostle Paul also declares, that though to continue with the church in that day was

¹ 2 Tim. i. 10.

² 1 Cor. xv. 55.

more needful for them ; yet he had a “ desire
“ to depart, and to be with Christ,” which
he declared to be “ far better ¹,” as then he
should be “ absent from the body, but pre-
“ sent with the Lord ².”

What comfort ! But our adversaries have
endeavoured to damp this also ; and we are
the more concerned at it, knowing the prone-
ness of our hearts already to unbelief ³. They
have told us, that man has NO SOUL SEPA-
RATE FROM HIS BODY ; and that from the
instant a man dies, until his body is raised
again, he is in an inactive, torpid state, which
to us appears to be worse than a hedge-hog,
a dormouse, or a bat.

We admit that Stephen “ fell asleep ⁴,”
but it was a far different sleep. It was not
a sleep of the soul ; for he cried out, “ Lord
“ Jesus, receive my spirit ;” and then the
body fell asleep, and was resolved into the
dust from which it was taken ; but when
“ the trumpet shall sound, and the dead
“ shall be raised ⁵,” and “ he shall change ⁶

¹ Phil. i. 23.

² 2 Cor. v. 8.

³ Matt. vi. 30.

Luke xii. 28.

⁴ Acts vii. 59, 60.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 52.

⁶ Phil. iii. 21.

“ our

“ our vile body, that it may be fashioned
 “ like unto his glorious body, according to
 “ the working whereby He is able to sub-
 “ due all things unto Himself: Then shall
 “ be brought to pass the saying that is writ-
 “ ten; Death is swallowed up in victory ¹.”

Does not St. Paul speak of “ the spirits of
 “ just men made perfect ² ?”

Does not a greater than Paul admonish us
 thus? “ Fear not them which kill the body,
 “ but are not able to kill the soul; but ra-
 “ ther fear him, which is able to destroy
 “ both soul and body in hell ³.”

Have you the hardihood to dare to accuse
 Him who “ spake as never man spake ⁴,”
 with using language to deceive us?

Do you presume to assert, that although
 the poor thief's body was mangled on the
 cross, and afterwards removed; do you say
 that he was not that day admitted into para-
 dise?

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 54.

² Heb. xii. 23.

³ Matt. x. 28.

⁴ John vii. 46.

If you were right, how could John have beheld “ the souls of them who were be-
“ headed for the witness of Jesus, and for
“ the word of God ’ ? ”

Having one sermon of Dr. Priestley by us, we cannot but transcribe a passage.—It is in his sermon on the death of Dr. Price.

“ If we may be allowed to indulge our-
“ selves in a reflection not of the most serious
“ nature, but suggested by a review of Dr.
“ Price’s labours ; supposing the amount of
“ the expectation of life to be in my case, as
“ I find about fourteen years, in many of you
“ not more than half that number, and at
“ the most not much more than twenty in
“ those whose age admitted of any long ac-
“ quaintance with him, and the interval
“ between the time of our death and that of
“ our resurrection to be nothing at all, be-
“ cause not perceived by us, it is in effect
“ only fourteen or about twenty years that
“ we can expect to be separated from him ;
“ and in this life we often pass more time

• Rev. xx. 4.

“ without

“ without seeing those whom we most re-
 “ spect, but with the idea of seeing them
 “ again, and of their not being unhappy, we
 “ are not distressed at their absence.—
 “ How then ought we to be affected, who
 “ as Christians not only hope, but firmly
 “ believe that in so short a space we may
 “ see our deceased friend again, and be able
 “ to tell him what he will be as eager to
 “ learn, how those things about which he
 “ most interested himself respecting the wel-
 “ fare of his country, and of mankind, went
 “ on after his death : and such is the prospect
 “ that is now opening upon us respecting
 “ the enlargement of civil and religious li-
 “ berty, and the extension of general hap-
 “ piness, that the longest liver will probably
 “ have the best news to carry him.”

Now every idea in this passage is founded
 upon your opinion, that man has no soul but
 his body ; which assertion, and every other
 of your assertions, remember YOU MUST
 ANSWER FOR hereafter.

You say the above assertion is not of the most serious nature. In this we perfectly agree with you. The Scripture account of death, and the resurrection, and “ judgment “ to come ’,” is not like it; for that is awfully solemn indeed! But, as you justly observe, your reflection is not of the most serious nature; nay, it appears to us to be so ludicrous, that if it were not in a sermon, and that a funeral sermon, we should think it had been an impious attempt to burlesque the subject.

We can scarcely prevail upon ourselves to tell the ideas which immediately followed reading it, and which appeared to us to be involved therein: but we must for that purpose endeavour to divest the subject from having any connection with religion; and it will answer the same purpose, if we suppose the Doctor to have fallen into just such a sleep as affects the dormouse; and that his friends one after another fall into a like sleep, and are all awakened together. What must be the consequence? You say, he who continues longest awake, will probably have the

† Acts xxiv. 25.

best news to carry him ; but the misfortune is, that you suppose all the dispatches to arrive at the same time ; and the poor Doctor would certainly be at a loss which to open ; or rather, of which friend to enquire first. We must presume one to begin :—Great news, Doctor ; all the oaths our continental associates have taken, are dispensed with ; nay, in fact, they have taken so many oaths, that they are determined to wash their hands from all, and are raising a glorious fabrick. O, says another, let me tell the Doctor.—They have cut the throats of many thousand unresisting prisoners.—Pray hold your tongue, says a third ; you began sleeping in 1791. I was awake till Michaelmas 1792. I left them debating whether they should try the King : they all agreed that he was guilty before they talked of trying him.

We must then suppose many to begin at once, endeavouring to open their glorious news.—The Princess de Lamballe's head—The Thuilleries forced by the brave—No National religion—They have called you the Apostle of Liberty—No King—I left Paris in a state—Monsieur le Duc—Monsieur Egalité

—The Doctor at last stops his ears, and addresses them: Messieurs, I humbly thank you; but be so kind as to have a little pity on me, and let me request you severally to consult together, and particularly to ascertain the order of time in which you severally dozed; or if you will have the goodness to ascertain whose eyes were last open, I would beg of him to present me with a summary, as my whole stock of calculations will not enable me to ascertain to which express I am to pay the first attention, as I find to my discomfit, that although you have set out express at such distant times one from the other, you have unhappily all arrived at a moment together.

Your ludicrous thoughts put us in mind of a traveller's story of a place where the frost is said to be so intense as to freeze the people's words as they are speaking, which accumulate until there comes a thaw, when a new Babel is the consequence, And really we think that Babel did not produce such a specimen of confusion, as you have done in religion.

We

We are not persons given to treat any subject lightly. The above thoughts were suggested to us on reading the passage, as the natural consequence resulting from it; and we therefore beg, that if there is any improper levity in the above, it may be considered as Dr. Priestley's, and not ours; as no such foolish suppositions had entered our thoughts, but for the Doctor's suggestion.

Are THESE THE MEN whose SUPERIOR WISDOM entitle them to the CHARACTER OF REFORMERS?

Reformation signifies amendment. If St. Paul's church wanted repair, should we think of placing barrels of powder under it? This is a new mode of reparation or reformation; but it may happen that the explosion not being strong enough to affect the building, may only affect him who bears THE DARK LANTHORN, AND THE LIGHTED MATCH.

OUR

OUR LORD CAME FROM HEAVEN.

The poor unbelieving Jews (may God remove the vail ¹ from their hearts) took up stones to cast at our Lord, because he said unto them, “ Verily I say unto you, before “ Abraham was, I am ².”

They did not believe in him, although he declared unto them, “ I came forth from “ the Father, and am come into the world ; “ again, I leave the world, and go to the “ Father ³ ;” and again, “ What and if ye “ shall see the Son of Man ascend up where “ he was before ⁴.” Yet the adversaries have declared that our dear Lord and Master never existed before his appearance upon earth.

Do you indeed declare these things ? And if you do, why do you not join the unbelieving Jews ? We have been told that you

¹ 2 Cor. iii. 15.

² John viii. 58.

³ John xvi. 28.

⁴ John vi. 62.

have

have made overtures to this purpose, but that they do not like you : Is it so ?

We mean well, and hope you will not take it amiss that we here give you another warning ; they, the Jews, for their “ unbelief,”—we repeat it, for it is the word of God,—for their “ UNBELIEF” were cut off, and the Gentiles by the favour of God, “ grafted in¹.” If “ God spared not the natural branches, “ think you that he will spare you ?” The Apostle declares that we stand by faith ; and if thou hast no faith to stand by, and continuest to resist his Word, remember that “ The Lord” not only “ knoweth how to “ deliver the godly out of temptation,” but “ to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished² ;” and remember, “ The unbelieving, and all liars” (and who is a liar, if he is not who contradicts the God of truth) “ shall have their part in the “ lake which burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death³.”

The Jews, it is true, (may God remove the vail from their hearts) are continued a

¹ Rom. ii. 20.

² 2 Pet. ii. 9.

³ Rev. xxi. 8.

separate, distinct people still; not only to shew the accomplishment of those dreadful denunciations of their great Lawgiver¹ against their wickedness, but also for great, inexpressibly great and gracious purposes, which have been the burthen of the Prophets' song, and the firm dependance of those who believe in the Bible. "If they abide not in unbelief, they also shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in²."

The time is predicted, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth which brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt: But the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the seed of the House of Israel out of the North country, and from all countries whither he had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land³."

But do not vainly rank yourselves, if unbelievers, with this **DISTINGUISHED NATION**. You, if you reject the Word of God, (which you do, if you, by comments, explain

¹ Deut. xxviii.

² Rom. ii. 23.

³ Jer. xxiii. 7, 8.

it away) will stand in a far other light. The punishments denounced against them may be chiefly temporal; but the punishments denounced against the false prophet we are sure is “to be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, which is the second death; there to be tormented day and night for ever and ever¹.”

The Jews, for crucifying THEIR KING, have been ever since scattered into all nations. Our Sovereign acknowledges the King whom they crucified. Is it therefore any wonder that they who are like the Jews in their unbelief, should wish to be like them in rejection of their King?

¹ Rev. xix, 20,—xx, 10,—xxi, 8.

SATAN.

S A T A N.

“ Heaven and earth shall pass away; but
“ my word shall not pass away¹;” is the
declaration of our gracious Saviour.—

And his Word declares,

“ Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into
“ the wilderness to be tempted of the de-
“ vil².” Pray read the fourth chapter of
St. Matthew, where the Tempter speaks;
and particularly note in what manner our
Saviour replies. We are also particularly in-
formed of numbers of MIRACLES performed by
our blessed Lord, and through faith in Him,
by his disciples, in casting out devils, which
every one who has read the New Testament
must have observed: but in particular we
observe the account of “ a certain man which
“ had devils a long time, and ware no clothes,
“ neither abode in any house, but in the
“ tombs; and when he saw Jesus, he cried
“ out, and fell down before him; and with
“ a loud voice said, What have I to do with

¹ Matt. xxiv. 35.

² Matt. iv. 1.

“ Thee,

“ Thee, Jesus; Thou Son of God Most
 “ High, I beseech Thee torment me not ¹.”
 “ And devils also came out of many, crying
 “ out and saying, Thou art Christ the Son
 “ of God; and he rebuking them, suffered
 “ them not to speak, for they knew that He
 “ was Christ ².”

These are quotations from our Bible: but our afflictors and disturbers alledge that there is no devil; and the way they use to convince us that there is none is, by saying that all devils are demons, and that there being no such thing as a demon, there is no such being as a devil. They moreover pretend that they know so much of the Divine will, as to be positive, that God almighty would never permit one such being as a devil to exist, much less a number of devils.

Now we, poor ignorant men, think the above is not only presumptuous impiety, but also blasphemy, inasmuch as it contradicts the Word of God, which declares that our Saviour was tempted of the devil; which could not be fact, if their allegation were true;

¹ Luke viii. 27, 28.

² Luke iv. 41.

and also blasphemy, inasmuch as it charges their Saviour with deception in replying to Satan, which could not be, if there were no Satan to reply to. It also charges Him who knew no guile, with deceiving his disciples and others by pretending to cast out devils, which, if what our disturbers alledge be true, was never done, as it is impossible to cast that out of any place which never had any existence in it.

We therefore request that, if these are the opinions of our oppressors, they will in few words avow the same; and in particular, that they may answer the following questions:

Do you believe that there is a being called Satan and the Devil?

Do you believe that our Saviour was tempted by him?

Do you believe that our Saviour, and by His power also His Apostles, cast out Devils?

If

If there be no devil, how can he be bound and “ shut up for a thousand years’ ?” and how can he afterwards be cast into that “ Lake of fire and brimstone,” into which the beast and false prophet are cast before him ?

We believe all that is revealed in the Word of God, and consequently that there are devils, wicked spirits, as well as wicked men; and we are told that the devil is “ the Prince “ of the power of the air’ ;” and understanding that our chief adversary has got much of his celebrity by playing tricks in this element, we humbly request those who have more discernment than we have, to hold him up to public view in his true colours; and in particular to watch over us poor ignorant people, that we may not “ be ignorant of his “ devices’ .” We are told in Scripture, which we believe, that he is sometimes transformed into “ an angel of light’ ;” and if so, how much easier can he assume the character of, and pretend to be, a Minister of the gospel ? We are taught by our blessed Master,

¹ Rev. xx. 3.

² Rev. xx. 10.

³ Eph. ii. 2.

⁴ 2 Cor. ii. 11.

⁵ 2 Cor. ii. 14.

that Satan is "the father of lies"; and we think that since his impudent proposition to our Saviour, to fall down and worship him, he has hardly made a more impudent attempt than this, in denying his own existence.

Are not those who endeavour to persuade us out of our religion and our loyalty, acting perfectly consistent in endeavouring to fail under false colours, and to persuade us that instead of their acting under Satan's commission, there is no Satan to act under?

¹ John viii. 44.

CHURCH

CHURCH GOVERNMENT. 490

WE understand from such of our ancestors as were Dissenters, that one of the chief grounds of their separation from the national Church, was on account of Church government; they at that time thinking that they should be able to keep up a better Church discipline than that established in the national Church.

They no doubt acted for the best; and far be it from us to cast any, the least reproach upon their memory: But we cannot help observing, that the Church of England has, at least in its doctrine, continued much purer than the dissenting Churches; for there have been such mutations among them, that it is utterly impossible to speak of their sentiments with any precision; for within a few miles of us there stands an old meeting, which we understand to have originally belonged to a good old puritan church; who being all dead, by degrees it became, as it changed its ministers, first one thing, then another, until

it has at length become a receptacle for our oppressors, almost at open war with Church and State.

Oh, if some of our good old grandfathers could again for once fill their seats, much as they were contemned in their day, and in some things hardly used, we think they would eject their orator from his rostrum, turn their meeting into a barn, and desire an admission into the Church.

One of our neighbours, who has been a traveller, says, that it is so in many other places. We beg these things may be enquired into; and if facts, that they may be represented to poor unlearned Dissenters, whose fathers were good men, and who may not be aware of the poison which is prepared for their souls.

One instance in particular we cannot help observing. Dr. Price, who is now dead, and on whose actions we will therefore forbear to comment; but we find him to have been an Arian, inasmuch as in a book which hath been lent us, he avows it, and declares himself

himself so much dissatisfied with the Socinian persuasion, that he could as soon, if not sooner, become a Churchman than a Socinian. He dies—Dr. Priestley, an avowed Socinian, (we beg pardon for using words which we do not thoroughly understand) preaches his funeral sermon, and is elected to succeed him. This is changing one's religion as easy as a great coat. Are these things so?

In the church of England we have some security against these metamorphoses; and this is one reason that many of our friends are turned churchmen; for they have expressed their fear, that as they have lived to see avowed attempts to degrade their exalted Saviour, that their children may live to hear MAHOMET commended, and preached in his stead.

Shall we associate with those who are thus “given to change?”—No—“Let us fear the Lord, and the King’.” These

† Prov. xxiv. 21.

men, who are so given to change in what they call their religion, are those who want changes in our government; and if they were to succeed, would leave us no government at all.—Are they not perfectly consistent?

THE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Jews looked for a sudden, violent establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah, to exalt them, deliver them from bondage, and subdue the nations under them.

They had no idea of a suffering Messiah; although his sufferings were predicted by their Prophets. Like some in the present day, THEY SELECTED SUCH PART OF THEIR SCRIPTURES AS WERE AGREEABLE TO THEM, AND LEFT THE REST.

The Christian dispensation was therefore not at all to their minds, as the kingdom of God therein revealed was of a far different nature.

We take the liberty to declare what is our faith concerning the kingdom of God.

He without whom "a sparrow falleth not
"to the ground", hath not left this world

¹ Matt. x. 29.

to blind chance ; but He does rule and overrule all the, otherwise to outward appearance, uncertain events of this life, and that with a peculiar reference to his church and people ¹.

Our Lord, when on earth, was made “ per-
fect through sufferings ² ;” and it seems to be His will that His people in like manner should be “ partakers of the same ³ ;” but they need not be discouraged, inasmuch as their “ sufficiency is of God ⁴ .”

The kingdom of God, instead of being like the kingdoms of this world, and it being said, “ And the beginning of his kingdom “ was Babel, and Erech, and Calneh in the “ land of Shinar ⁵ ,” fixes the seat of empire in the mind, or heart, or soul, or spirit, being all, to our apprehension, nearly of a signification. “ THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS “ WITHIN YOU ⁶ .”

Instead of passion, pride, and other sinful tyrants reigning, he is now free : “ If the

¹ Dan. iv. 32.

² Heb. ii. 10.

³ 1 Pet. iv. 13.

⁴ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

⁵ Gen. x. 9.

⁶ Luke xvii. 21.

" Son make you free, ye shall be free in-
" deed ',"

The believer in Christ is a subject of a better kingdom, a citizen of a better city, " whose builder and maker is God ' ; " he is " a stranger and a sojourner upon earth ' , " and his thoughts, and pursuits, and actions have taken a different turn from what they were before.

He does not now view the changes which happen in the world, as produced by mere human power ; but he knows that the " earth " is the Lord's ' ; " and that He not only ruleth in the army of heaven, but also " among " the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can " stay His hand, or say unto Him, what " doest Thou ' ? " He is therefore not elated at present prosperity, or depressed by apparent adversity ; he commits all events to the Lord, knowing that " He doeth all things " well ' . "

* John viii. 36.

* Heb. ii. 10.

* Psal. xxxix. 12.

† 1 Cor. x. 26.

* Dan. iv. 35.

† Mark vii. 37.

He knows the Bible to be not only the great Law book ¹ of this kingdom, but also a history of all events which have materially affected it, and a declaration of all events which shall affect it to all eternity ².

He is happy in humbly endeavouring to trace out in events which have happened, the accomplishment of the words of Christ.

For this purpose he considers the investigation of history not so much as an amusement, as a Christian duty; inasmuch as he thereby discovers the fulfilment of our Saviour's prophecies in the destruction of Jerusalem, in the persecution and dispersion of the Jews, and in the present state of the world.

These are not with him matters of speculation, they are the exultations of faith, and are accompanied with the expression of confidence in that God, who alone can reveal "that which shall come to pass ³."

He is also confirmed, strengthened and rejoiced, when truth is properly displayed, to

¹ Psal. cxix.

² Rev. iv. 1.

³ Isa. xli. 23.

confirm the minds of any in the certainty of those prophecies which have already been fulfilled, or are now fulfilling in the world.

As he pays attention to what Moses and the prophets have written, to what Christ his Lord and Master hath declared, and to the exhortations of His Apostles; he also pays a peculiar attention to that Book which his blessed Saviour, after his glorification, dictated to His beloved Disciple, declaring that it was “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to shew unto His servants what must come to pass’.”

Surely it must have been a most important revelation to be worthy such a Revealer, and to be expressed in such glorious language.

He ponders over the admonitions which it contains¹; he prays to be delivered from that delusion which is therein foretold to come upon the earth²; but above all, he prays that he and his may be kept from “the mark of the beast,” knowing that whosoever

¹ Rev. i. 1.

² Rev. ii.—iii.

³ Rev. xii. 9.

shall receive the same, “ shall be tormented
 “ with fire and brimstone in the presence of
 “ the holy angels, and in the presence of the
 “ Lamb ’.”

He is cautious not to be too positive in matters of such high moment, and his researches are always accompanied with “ Lord, teach Thou me ’.”

He is not ashamed to own his attachment to this as well as every other book of the sacred Scriptures ; he recommends the attentive reverential perusal of it, and he looks forward in expectation of joining the blissful songs recorded therein.

With these views, does he look on the earth with contempt ? By no means.—He knows “ it is the Lord’s.” He sees that the great afflictions which came upon the world soon after the promulgation of this sacred book, were predicted therein †. He discovers the æra of the martyrs pointed out, and sees the effect their mild and loving, and yet

† Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

‡ Psal. cxix.

§ Rev. vi.

courageous forbearance, had upon their persecutors ; and he finds that history confirms it ; that they rather suffered the most cruel deaths than give up that empire of the mind, whereof Christ, who dwelt in them, was the Sovereign ; that they rather chose to endure the loss of all things, even life itself, than injure “ that kingdom of God ” which was “ within them.”

The effects which this noble army of martyrs had on the world at large, he also discovers in this book. Their persecutors, weary of slaying, begin to reflect on the power which must accompany a religion which could so triumph over its opposers ; and that empire which had been its determined foe, becomes its protector, its promoter.

“ Give me neither poverty nor riches ¹,” was the prayer of a wise man. And we find that the riches bestowed on the Church by the Christian emperors and great men, produced an effect which is a frequent attendant upon them ; and the Church, in

¹ Prov. xxx. 8.

process of time, becomes almost apostate :
So much so, that a power arises therein “ dif-
ferent from all which ever preceded it’.”

Even this does not depress the believer in the whole word of God. In humble dependence upon HIM, he traces the features of this new power in the sacred page; and though he reads of the exertions which will be made by the “ false prophet” to re-establish it; though he reads of the “ miracles” and wonders which will be performed to confirm it; though he reads of that “ wicked woman,” “ that great city which reigneth “ over the kings of the earth,” which will be “ drunk with the blood of the saints, and “ with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus’;” he yet without fear, in full confidence, can look forward with a holy reverence towards Him who will in the end overcome. If he escapes, he hopes to praise God some time longer upon earth; but if he should be deemed worthy to receive that “ crown of “ life” which he knows his Master has in store for those who are “ faithful unto death;”

¹ Dan. vii. 7.

² Rev. xix. 20.

³ Rev. xvii. 5.

⁴ Rev. ii. 10.

he anticipates the glories of it, and with deep humility exclaims, "Thy will be done¹."

We will now look into the Christian's sentiments as a citizen and subject.

In the same passage which commands him to "FEAR GOD," he also finds it enjoined that he is to "HONOUR THE KING²."

He knows that his Saviour is "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords³;" and it gives him pleasure to find that his King upon earth admits the truth of it, and openly professes it, by declaring himself to be "GEORGE THE THIRD, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, KING." It is his prayer that the King may ever continue attached to the Word of God; and that when God shall call him out of this transitory world, he may exchange an earthly for an heavenly crown, and leave a son to fill his throne, whose chief desire may be to become the father of his people, and defender of the faith in his stead.

Whatever the station of life be in which he is placed, he is neither afraid nor ashamed

¹ Matt. vii. 10.

² 1 Pet. ii. 17.

³ Rev. xix. 16.

of professing these things, being sensible that he is following the orders of his Saviour, who by his Apostle Paul directed Titus to
 “ put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates¹. ”

He knows that it is further enjoined, “ Let
 “ every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of
 “ God: The powers that be, are ordained of God; for rulers are not a terror to good
 “ works, but to the evil. He is the minister of God, and beareth not the sword
 “ in vain; but is a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil: and for this
 “ cause he pays tribute also². ”

Therefore all intimations of resistance to the powers that be, are received by Him with horror; as He knows, that “ Who-
 “ soever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist,
 “ shall receive to themselves damnation. ”

Is he laughed at for these things, and accused of holding passive obedience, and non-

¹ Titus iii. 1,

² Rom. xiii.

resistance?

resistance? He replies, I care not what reproach may be cast on me; if it is in consequence of my attachment to my Saviour and his words; if I am on this account "persecuted, and evil spoken of," I will leap for joy, knowing that my "reward is great in heaven'."

Does the Christian, as a good citizen, think he perceives any thing, which in his opinion, deserves the attention of government; he does not attempt to effect this by endeavouring to AGITATE THE PUBLIC MIND, and sow THE SEEDS OF DISCONTENT. Far other are his views: his chief dependence is on God, whom he believes to be able to dispose and turn the heart of the King, and all that are put in authority under him; and as a means to this end, he privately, respectfully, and without either boldness or adulation, lays the subject before the proper department.

These are our principles; and we thank God they are not ours only, but the principles of the true members of our national

^a Matt. v. 11.

F

church,

church, and of all such of the dissenters as are not implacable enemies to our national church.

But these new religionists are not content with opposing what we think to be the foundation of our holy religion, they have attacked our RELIGIOUS LOYALTY, as well as our RELIGIOUS FAITH; but by the blessing of God our eyes are opened, and we hope by the plain, direct, unequivocal answers which our disturbers are required to give to the questions herein contained, that the eyes of others also will be opened, and that they will take warning, and avoid a band who will not be contented with our delivering any thing short of our faith in all the divine promises contained in the passages of Scripture herein before quoted, and without we will admit that we have NO SOULS, NO SAVIOUR, NO REDEEMER !

We think it necessary to declare our belief, that “ God hath made of one blood all “ the nations of the earth ¹,” and that “ He “ is no respecter of persons ².”

¹ Acts xvii. 26.

² Acts x. 34.

But

But our pesterers are always dinning in our ears that there should be no respect of persons among us; and in particular they alledge that all Kings, Rulers, and Governors, whatever they are called, and in whatever manner distinguished, are not the "Servants of God," but are the servants of the people; and as if they were infatuated and blown up by the pride which this idea conveys to them, they immediately thereupon begin talking of them in a manner that we should be ashamed to use to our poor menial servants.

It has been observed, that the Roman Catholic doctrine of abstinence from marriage, and worshipping of images, have always gone hand in hand together; when one has flourished, the other has flourished also; when one has for a time sunk, the other has accompanied it; and we think something of the same kind is observable in those who deny or explain away, that is, in those who openly deny, or secretly, darkly, and like an assassin, stab the Word of God.

We repeat that it is observable that those who set themselves in opposition to the:

Word of God, are also uniform in their opposition to the Governments under which they live. The above is our observation in our small sphere; but we would humbly beg that this matter be enquired into; and we are firmly of opinion that the result will be not only applicable to our present experience, but that it will be found ever to have been the case, that those who have daringly opposed the WORD OF GOD, have been either openly or covertly the promoters of SUBVERSION OF GOVERNMENT.

We therefore now proceed to ask a few questions of our disturbers; and in particular,

Do you believe that the Bible is our great and only rule both of faith and practice? If you do not, openly, and not by implication, declare that you do not.

Do you believe it is your duty to honour the King, and to be obedient unto Magistrates?

Do you believe that they are God's ministers?

Do you believe that they who resist the power, resist the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation?

Is it not perfectly consistent in the men who deny these truths, to endeavour to persuade the people that every King or Magistrate is the servant of the people?—Have not all those who have endeavoured to overturn Governments, and to SET UP THEMSELVES, been consistent therein?—Did not Gregory the Seventh, and his successors, who endeavoured to set the Papal chair above all the Kings of the earth, stile himself, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF CHRIST?—Is not this the old cause new-revived?

CONCLUSION.

WE conclude with addressing ourselves to those especially, who although in some measure infected, are not aware of the designs of our enemies, and to those who are most exposed to their attacks.

We are enjoined “to examine ourselves”¹; but it is too frequently the case, that instead of following the Apostolic injunction, we compliment ourselves upon our CANDOUR, and think it unnecessary.—Are you a candid man? a man of liberal sentiments? If you are, you cannot object to putting it to the test.

Coolly and deliberately set down in your study; and reflecting that you are in the presence of that God who “searcheth the hearts”², write an affirmative or negative to the foregoing questions.—Review also the course of your reading—Look at your library—Make a list of the Tracts on each side in

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Rev. ii.

separate columns; and when compleated, consider whether you would produce it in evidence of your candour.

But above all, consider whether you are in the habit of constantly and daily reading THE WORD OF GOD: if you are not, it is time you turn from man's wisdom to the wisdom of the Lord.—Be not discouraged; but if conviction of truth is produced even in the smallest degree, remember for your comfort, that Paul of Tarsus was not only an opposer of the truth, but a persecutor also.—May God in his mercy meet you also in the way: that instead of kicking against the pricks, you may enquire of Him whom you have opposed, “ Lord, what wouldest thou have “ me to do ’ ? ”

It has been strenuously maintained, that MATTERS OF OPINION ARE INDIFFERENT; but until we can separate opinion from action, and if this is done, opinion no longer becomes worth a rush, IT IS NOT a matter of indifference.

¹ Acts ix. 6,

There

There is such a thing as DELUSION. There is also such a thing as STRONG DELUSION, and a man's BELIEVING A LIE¹. It is an awful subject; but it is necessary to investigate it.

That God, "who is good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works²," will not be trifled with. "He is merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth³." He corrects, but it is in love, "as a father chasteneth a Son whom he loveth⁴." He bears long, and kindly expostulates, "Why will ye die⁵?"

But He will render a just "recompense" to those who daringly continue their opposition. Remember it is written, "Those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me⁶."

This is not only justice towards them, but also mercy towards those who, by their daring attempts, they would otherwise corrupt.

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 11.

² Psal. cxlv. 9.

³ Exod. xxxiv. 6.

⁴ Heb. xii. 7.

⁵ Ezek. xviii. 31.

⁶ Luke xix. 27.

"Hast

Hast thou seen the storehouse of his wrath?—Hast thou considered these things?—If not, read and devoutly meditate upon the sacred Scriptures, which will teach you “to flee from the wrath to come.”

Thou wilt there perceive that a **HARDENED HEART**, **DIM EYES**, and a **DEAF EAR**, are among **HIS SOREST JUDGMENTS**. Pharaoh sets himself to oppress and destroy his people¹, and insultingly cries, “Who is the Lord, “that I should obey his voice, to let Israel “go: I know not the Lord, neither will I “let Israel go².”

It then consists with a holy, good, and merciful God, to give him over to that **HARDENED HEART** which is the natural result of his impiety;—to suffer him to proceed to that length, that the world shall have a fearful example of the fruits of such works; and to say, “For this same purpose have I “raised thee up, that I might shew my “power in thee, and that my name might “be declared throughout all the earth³.”

¹ Exod. i.² Exod. v. 2.³ Rom. ix. 17.

The Jews, notwithstanding the unexampled mercies they enjoyed as a nation ¹, became as corrupt, if not more so, than those from whom, for their wickedness, the good land was taken away, and given unto them ²; and at last filling up the measure of their iniquities by rejecting the PRINCE OF LIFE ³, and daringly opposing the glad tidings preached in His name ⁴, they also became the objects of the just judgments of God; and as a prelude to those most astonishing calamities which they endured, He said, “Go and tell
 “ this people. Hear ye indeed, but under-
 “ stand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive
 “ not: Make the heart of this people fat,
 “ and make their ears heavy, and shut their
 “ eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and
 “ hear with their ears, and understand with
 “ their heart, and convert and be healed ⁵.”

Remember it is written to those who daringly oppose His Word, “He shall send
 “ them strong delusions, that they should
 “ believe a lie; that they all might be
 “ damned who believe not the truth ⁶.”

¹ Deut. iv.

² Ezek. xvi.

³ Acts iii. 5.

⁴ Acts xviii. 6.

⁵ Isaiah vi. 9.

Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

Isaiah lxvi. 4.

⁶ 2 Thess. ii. 11.

Do not run to those whom you have almost considered as INFALLIBLE GUIDES, because they have such a knack at finding fault; do not go to them for systems, glosses, and comments to explain away these the plain words of God, but act the part of the more noble Bereans, and “search the scriptures, whether “these things are so¹;” and above all, look up to that God for a blessing on your research, who hath said, “If any man lack wisdom, “let him ask of God, and He will give it “him.”

Read the account of the vials pouring out in the Revelation, and observe, it is possible even for those under torment to “blaspheme the “name of that God who hath power over these “plagues².” You will there perceive that it is possible for mankind to be so hardened by unbelief and all wickedness, as to be deceived by the devil to fill up the measure of their iniquities by worshipping the beast³.

IT IS OUR FEAR THAT THE PRESENT
AGITATION IN THE WORLD IS, AS IT

¹ Acts xvii. 11.

² Rev. xvi.

³ Rev. xix. 20.

WERE,

WERE, THE PRELUDE TO THIS DREAD-
FUL HARVEST OF WICKEDNESS; AND WE
THEREFORE CONCLUDE WITH SAYING,
BEWARE.

THE END.

